

people of the Virgin Islands, the friendship you have shown me over the years, and I wish you well in your new adventure. I am sure that many of us are going to wish that there were times when you were here that we can come to you for counsel, but perhaps you will leave a phone number where you can be reached.

Again, thank you for the help and assistance and recognition of the people in the islands and their position of almost helplessness. You have taken it on on our behalf. God bless you for that assistance, and God speed in your new adventure.

LOSING THE NO. 1 MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, in the RECORD, I guess my remarks will appear last for my dear friend, SAM, who decided to leave the Congress and to leave the Committee on Ways and Means. Politically and legislatively that puts me as the No. 1 Democrat. But, quite frankly, we are losing the No. 1 Committee on Ways and Means member, a person that served with Wilbur Mills, a person that has been on the committee since 1969 even though he came to the Congress in 1962, one that no one challenges has done more to promote U.S. trade with NAFTA and with GATT as well as being the lead person with President Johnson on social issues.

We are going to miss SAM because he is the only one on the committee that had a sense of institutional memory. And I know one thing, I feel a lot more strong knowing that SAM will be there with me in the next year whereby every possible poll and every moral reason, the Democrats will be in charge of this particular House.

So Mr. Speaker, we will make certain that the gentleman's leadership carries on in the House and try to reverse some of the setbacks that we have had in terms of legislation that gentleman has been promoting, and I regret that I am last, but I am glad that I got here in time.

□ 1315

PARTING REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE SAM GIBBONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELLER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GIBBONS] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this every much. First I want to thank my colleague, Ms. BROWN, for arranging this and her staff for doing all of this. I realize that many Members could not be here today and have sub-

mitted their remarks for the RECORD, for which I am most grateful. I am very grateful, too, for those who were able to show up today and pay me this honor. I am very proud that my wife, Martha, is here in the gallery to my left hearing all of this. I am overwhelmed by it. I do not deserve it all, but I darn sure appreciate every bit of it.

This is not my last speech, and for that many of you can take a deep breath, because I am sure there are going to be many more battles in which we will agree and disagree, and I intend to participate in them.

I retire now because I think it is time to do so. I have enjoyed every minute of the service I have been privileged to have for my constituents and for the American people.

I am proud of the Congress. Oftentimes the Congress is misunderstood. We do not deal with the easy issues, and Americans really do not like conflict and they do not like us to express differences of opinion. They are very uncomfortable when they do that. Therefore, the Congress is often misunderstood.

This is a group of very dedicated people and vary skillful people, and people who have deep convictions about what they are doing. It takes a lot of patience to understand them and to tolerate the differences in views, but we must do that. That is democracy in action. That is what America is all about.

I have become acquainted with most of the other parliamentary bodies on Earth, and none has the responsibility or the power that is possessed by the Congress, and particularly by the House of Representatives of the Congress. That is a form of government that most other nations have looked at and have decided not to adopt, for one reason or another, but I think it has served our country well for all these years. It will always be a tremendous privilege to me to look back and say I was able to participate in all that deliberation and all that work.

Martha and I will go to a new career. I am not exactly sure what it is going to be. I hope to teach a little. I hope to practice law with my sons a little. I hope to come back up here and work with some of my colleagues and all of my colleagues on two particular issues that I am interested in. One is keeping the markets of the world open, because I believe that nations that trade with each other do not end up fighting each other, and I think it is good for America and good for the world that we keep the markets of the world open. I am proud of the small contributions I have made in that.

The other is to do something about our revenue system. America cannot afford the terrible revenue system that we now have. It is not that the tax burden is so high on Americans; it is the clumsy way in which we collect the taxes that really irritates the Americans.

Frankly, our misunderstood tax system extracts less on a per capita basis from our people than the tax systems of 25 other industrialized nations who inhabit this globe. But our very clumsy system of collecting taxes makes it a heavy burden for all of us to carry. That needs to be changed, because we cannot remain competitive, we cannot maintain our standard of living, unless we change our tax system, unless we keep our markets open, unless we educate our people, because from the brains and the bodies of our people comes the strength of our country and the standard of living which we all love to have and which is going to be more and more difficult to maintain.

So I get ready to leave here at the end of this term in a happy frame of mind and, fortunately, in good health, and very, very grateful for the friendships, for the experience, and for what I was allowed to do while here.

Martha and I love this place. We love the people. We love the staff and all those who work around here. Particularly we are grateful to those people who elected us year after year after year and allowed us to serve here.

Thank you, and God bless America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House, and any manifestation of approval or disapproval of the proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the House stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 24 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. CLINGER] at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Reverend Luis Leon, rector, St. John's Church, Lafayette Square, Washington, DC, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, Who has given us this good land for our heritage, we humbly pray that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of the grace You have granted us. Bless our land with honorable industry and sound learning and faithful leadership. Save us from violence and discord, confusion and chaos, pride and arrogance. Defend our liberties and fashion into one nation the good people brought here out of many lands and languages. Endue